

DOCUMENT HEADER

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Summary:

Great Summe History

Comments:

Roy Boothe

Douglas Robinson

White Mountain Ranger District

The Bishop-Benton country has been central to mining since the Civil War times. Mines in the upper Bishop Creek canyons produced lead-silver east of South Lake and gold in the Cardinal mine just below Lake Sabrina. Up Coyote Creek some half dozen tungsten mines operated between Lookout Mountain and the Hunchback. At one time, the Poleta mine ~~was~~ CHECK of Bishop, supported the first white man's town of settlement in the northern Owens Valley. In 1869, Mexicans were mining the one good producing claim. Ores from the Poleta, Black Canyon mines, and the Southern Belle were milled at Owensville. Subsequent owners and miners worked the claim through the years - one even built a mill and had a 3800 foot pipeline from Redding Canyon bringing water to it. (Clark 1978:137).

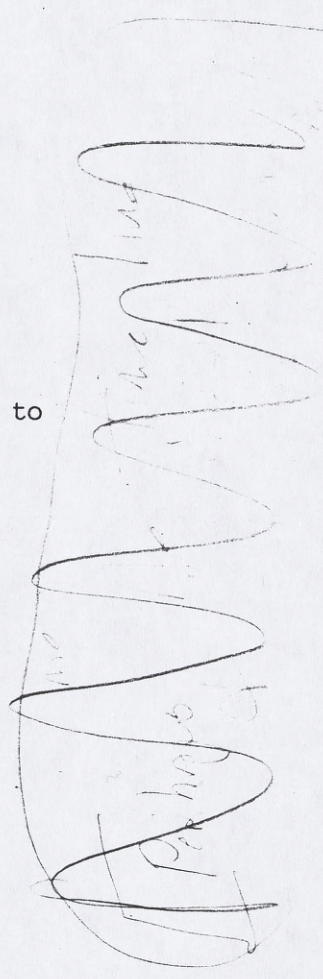
With abundant water, fertile soil, and square miles of natural grasslands attracting settlers, the northern end of the Owens Valley became a prosperous ranching community with Bishop as its center. Bishop took its name from Samuel Bishop, who drove a herd of cattle from Fort Tejon, built two small cabins and started his San Francis Ranch about three miles west of the present town. The first winter he stayed, 1861-62, trouble started between the Paiutes and other newly arrived cattlemen and Bishop left soon after. (Schumacher, 1969:55).

Slowly, with ranching, mining, and commerce, Bishop grew and thrived and became one of those small, rural eastern California towns. Bishop Union High School was established after a vote on March 29, 1902 of the townspeople, 176 to 72, which favored financing the "real beginning of higher education in this region." (Chalfant, 1933:326).

In April, 1902, citizens of Bishop organized the Bishop Light and Power Company to supply local needs--the county's first electric enterprise. Its plant, starting in September of that year, was successfully managed until absorbed by the Nevada-California Power Company. This latter concern, backed by Colorado capital, saw in the growth of Tonopah and Goldfield a market for power, and in the tumbling torrents of Sierra streams an opportunity for its cheap production. Power locations on Bishop Creek had long been held by different locators, who had merely renewed their filings from time to time. Those sites were secured by the new enterprises. Generating plants were built, land transmission lines extended, first into Nevada, then southerly almost to the Mexican line, until now the longest power lines in the world carry the energy of Bishop Creek From Mono County on the north into Arizona and Imperial Valley on the south. (Chalfant, 1933:331).

Even before the Inyo National Forest was established in 1907, the Wells Meadow Ranger Station served a key role as the headquarters for the "East District, or East Side" of the Sierra National Reserve and later Forest. Each

16. This is a
Quartzite
1863
abandoned
mine



too much

location?

summer, the guard station was manned by someone from the Sierra National Reserve. The guys on the west side would always joke that whomever might get in trouble with the ranger would be the one assigned to Wells Meadow the next summer. (Thorne, 1989).

In October of 1903, Rangers R.L.P. Bigelow, came to the east side to try to prevent sheep trespasses and fight fires on what they called the "Inyo District". (Robinson, 1933:10). "Among the rangers who worked under Bigelow were M.F. Russell, F.G. (Gus) Goodale, Henry Bell, John Callaway, Thomas Clark, John E. Bell, Sid. Seymour, J.W. Hanby and Fred Dell." (Robinson, 1933:18). It was this same period when (OR Meanwhile) the Owens Valley was discovered and coveted by the Reclamation Service and later William Mulhollan and later yet, the City of Los Angeles. (Kahrl, 1982).

In 1906, Harry Perego was put in charge of the East Side and he and D.N. Rogers are reported to have built a 16 by 24 foot house of one and a half stories at Wells Meadow. (Brooks ????? and Robinson, 1933). Hence the first ranger station on the East Side and the Inyo was built before the forest itself was established. The meadow is still used today for stock pasture.

During the spring of 1907, A.H. Hogue (later Inyo's first Supervisor), Glen Crow, Raymond Tyler and John Y. Toler came to the Inyo side from work on the Sierra. In July accounts of 1907, is an item of \$5. for one half use of hotel room at Bishop, for office purposes, other half use of hotel room paid by Forest officer who used it for sleeping purposes. For this same month we find that the pay roll amounted to \$599.49 and probably included salary payments for Hogue, Crow, Tyler, Toler, and others. (Robinson, 1933:20)

By July 1, 1907 (and possibly before that date) the "east Side" was known as the Sierra East. It had somewhat of a semi-independent organization, and keeping their own accounts. Although the Inyo National Forest was already created, it was, for the most part, located in valley lands, and the main part of the "East Side" forest areas remained as part of the Sierra. CITE

The Nevada-California Power Company was doing considerable work resulting in an additional work load for Rogue and Tyler. Surveying (boundaries and private land) was a big item. CITE

Crow, in addition to general administration, devoted himself largely to grazing administration. He had a good knowledge of farming and stock, and got along well with the stockmen. (Robinson, 1933:21).

An ^{Interview} oral history with Gus Cashbaugh, an early rancher who ran cattle on the forest states that A.H. Hogue, who was forest supervisor from 1908 until 1919, kept an office in the Valley View Hotel in Bishop, but lived at the Wells Meadow Ranger Station in Round Valley. (Inyo Register historic files)

In 1911, "Sidney Stoner came during the summer and with a small crew spent two or three months mapping the White Mountains. Two small buildings were put up at the Crooked Creek Ranger Station, and better fences built there," Robinson

In the White Mtns

(1933:25-26) wrote. Today those two stone buildings remain, leased by the Deep Springs College for use as base for the cow camp the college runs each summer.

Various other ranger headquarters were established, but nothing remains of them today. Information was sketchy about the first two decades of the new forest and we are dependent on what was captured in the musty files. A main source of information was the Statement of Organization of the Inyo by Douglas Robinson, who arrived on the Inyo in 1911 and retired in 1933 (I BELIEVE - LOOK FOR DATE)

Glen Crow had a very nice little Ranger Station at Longley Meadows, with good barn, residence, shop, and other small buildings. About 35 tons of hay yearly out of there. Toler at Oak Creek, and Cleveland at Wells Meadow also had well kept Ranger Stations. (Robinson, 1933:25-26).

With my family I occupied the Longley Meadows Ranger Station during the summers of 1914 and 1915 and during the winter of 1914-15. It was a good place for a man working on small salary, as we were able to have a garden and chickens. Two small sawmills on Bishop Creek, and grazing Admin. took up most of the time in the summer, while boundary and private land surveys occupied the winter. We must have been tough, spending the winters in the higher altitudes (sic) quartered in a tent, and wading through snow for weeks at a time.

Land settlement (June 11ths) with attending reports and maps, was also a good part of our work. (Robinson, 1933:27).

At Big Pine, the first ranger station was located at McMurray Meadows, west of the town of Big Pine. J.P. Luccock, who also was a dentist, was the first ranger who lived and patrolled from the meadow outpost. Next Bob Logan took over. (Robinson, 1933 and Hess, 1989.). During Lawson Brainerd's tour as district ranger, Logan owned a pack station up the Big Pine drainage.

In 1915 and 1916, Marion Brown arrived on the scene and built a small house with an smaller office next to it in the town of Big Pine. He died of the flu in 1918. (Robinson, 1933 and Brainerd Autobiography, N.D.)

Wes Hotelling took over as ranger at Big Pine. A portion of his log book tells how he rode horseback from his post at Big Pine to Oak Creek at Independence, did a day's work, repaired fence, counted cattle, etc. and rode back to the small house in Big Pine just before dark. (1921, 1922, 1923).

From 1924 to 1929, Lawson Brainerd occupied the house as the Big Pine Ranger. He patrolled the backcountry from Bishop Pass to Mount Whitney on horseback with his wife, Helen. He described their trips through the rugged country, the grazing challenges he faced, and many details of his daily existence in a delightful autobiography.

The twenties were interesting years on the East slope of the Sierra for grazing. Many of the permittees selling out to Los Angeles. I was trying to get the sheepmen and the cattlemen to share the same range for better utilization. This, as you can imagine, was like trying to tie a double bowline in the Devil's tail without his cooperation. Surprisingly, when I left it was working out well on the McMurry and Coyote ranges. (Brainerd, N.D.).

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Meanwhile the White Mountains were a separate district. H.H. Simpson from the Shasta National Forest began his many years on the Inyo with the boundary survey crew stationed at McAffe Ranch in Fish Lake Valley. Simpson was district ranger for the White Mountain District, before he went on to be district ranger at Mammoth and then ranger-at-large and later assistant supervisor with headquarters at Bishop. (Robinson, 1933).

About 1927, the White Mountain district was added to the Big Pine district. (Brainerd, N.D.). When Al Noren retired from the Big Pine in 1952, the present White Mountain district including lands north to Rock Creek was formed.

who were in

A NEW ERA - ROY BOOTHE ARRIVES

When Roy Boothe was supervisor of the Inyo National Forest from 1926 to 1945, both the family and the forest headquarters moved around a great deal. Boothe and family first lived on Elmhurst Street, a one block section of Elm Street in Bishop. A year and a half later, in 1931, "we moved out to a ranch that no longer exists at the Wye Road where the Yaney family lived. We lived there for four years. My mother couldn't wait to get out of town. With four kids she wanted to have a little more room to roam," explained Helen Dixon, daughter of Roy Boothe, who continues to live in Bishop.

From the Yaney house we moved out to a place that had been occupied by a family named Finch, a DWP house on Mandich Street. We were there for about 10 years. Then my folks moved into the Forest Service house on North Main Street. That was about 1941, the Supervisor's son recalled. The interesting thing was that Mother didn't want to move out there on the highway," Helen said. Today that site is an integral part of town, but in those days it was out of the city limits of Bishop. (Boothe Family, 1990).

Roy Boothe and his administrative style were likely most helpful to the Inyo National Forest when legislation authorizing the Civilian Conservation Corps was signed and its rapid implementation started. In retrospect, we can see that President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's innovative approach to save both the youth of the country and its natural resources was to benefit Boothe's low-budget, neglected forest.

(MY CONCLUSIONS - BASED ON MY RESEARCH)

Suddenly work projects were needed in every unit of the forest. Supervisor Boothe was called to San Francisco in March to attend a planning meeting for the CCC's. (Inyo Register, NEED DATE and California Ranger, 1933.) We can only imagine him lobbying heartily for a road to access the trail to Mount Whitney, for other roads and trails to serve the needs of the forest destined to be a major recreation forest.

Booth also was a good friend of General Harold Arnold, the military commander of the CCC for California. He met him thru his interest in flying when he was on the Sierra in the 1920's and the Army was testing the concept of flying surveillance for forest fires. (Booth, 1940).

The late '20s and the early '30s were trying times for everyone. We (meaning the Forest Service, and he could have been speaking for the Inyo) participated in the CCC program

come from in
to 1920's

Good point

to supplement the income of the area. Road programs and the building of many lookout towers and administration buildings were all a part of the effort to aid the local economy," Wes Hotelling, ranger on the southern Inyo from 1921 to 1927, wrote in his memoirs years later. Hotelling, N.D.p.--)

To show how Boothe's hospitality rewarded the good work done by the CCC's to encourage its happening, this small item appeared in the Forest Service's newsletter for Region 5. "Forest officers of the Inyo Forest held a picnic on Sunday afternoon, Sept. 10 for the Army officers, Camp Superintendents, and their families who are detailed to the C.C.C. units on the Inyo Forest. The affair was a pleasant outing, offering the opportunity to 'get acquainted.'" (California Ranger, Sept. 22, 1933).

In 1933, the first year of the Civilian Conservation Corps, a camp of more than 100 men were set up at Rock Creek Camp, F-99, at the Inyo Forest. They... "are constructing and widening roads in the High Sierra Country. A considerable amount of dynamite has been used to remove rocks and trees. The Camp Superintendent says they are real workers," The California Ranger reported in its August 18, 1933 edition. The Sept. 22 edition of that same newsletter noted that Rock Creek camp was "the highest known permanent C.C.C. camp in California.

"They built a good number of roads in the vicinity and had a spike camp at the entrance (from the south) of the Bristlecone complex. And the enrollees built the runways for the Bishop Airport," said Don Hobart, historian for the National Association of CCC Alumni. Eventually, "they developed a ranger station at the entrance and built a dirt road to White Mountain. And they built various truck trails." (Hobart, 1991).

On a more humorous vein, the next edition of the California Ranger reported that some of the boys at the Rock Creek Camp were honored guests at a snipe hunt:

at the full of the moon... It is reputed they would receive \$5.00 for creepers and \$8.00 for flyers. The boys planned to raise the National Depression and place the Conservation work on a paying basis. At the least there should be enough to finance a trip home. Regretably (sic) the wind was in the wrong direction and the boys failed through no fault of their own. One hand's efforts took him into the creek up to his chin while another one gave up after striking a whole box of matches while hiding behind a granite boulder with sack in hand. It is said that if they had not come from the urban vicinities of Ohio, success would have been greater. (California Ranger, Sept. 29, 1933).

The CCC crews improved and finished the Piute Pass and Bishop Pass trails. Packer Walt Schober and his wife, Lou, recall getting the contract to pack in the crew's supplies when the CCCs built trail. "We packed quite a little dynamite to them and it was a good start for the Paiute Trail," Schober stated. He recalled about 20 CCC boys camped at North Lake. They also improved the Bishop Pass Trail, a vital connecting link to the middle fork of the San Joaquin River and the John Muir Trail. (Schober, 1990).

Construction of the John Muir Trail began in 1914 from the Sierra National Forest under the direction of Roy Boothe. After he came to the Inyo, Boothe

continued to supervise the building of the John Muir Trail with the help of the CCCs. "As supervisor of that Forest (the Inyo), but because of the much shorter distance from point of road accessibility on the Eastern Side of the Sierra, it was much cheaper and easier to handle the supervision and subsistence, and supply of the camps from our side...during the season of 1937 and 1938," Boothe wrote in his memoirs, (1940:69) which devoted a few pages to the construction of the John Muir Trail. The trail was completed by 1939.

WHITE MOUNTAIN RANGER DISTRICT BUILDING

Inyo National Forest did not own any land within the Bishop area for shops or headquarters until 1935, when it purchased five acres for an administrative site from the City of Los Angeles for \$60.00. The deed was dated May 2, 1936 and recorded July 3, 1936 in Deed Book 38, page 54, Inyo County Records. The title was approved by the Attorney General Jan.19, 1937. The City reserved all the water rights, but the land then belonged to the Forest Service.

It is interesting that this date coincides with the Civilian Conservation Corps and the New Deal programs, just as the acquisition of the ranger station site in Lone Pine.. Most likely, a local contractor was hired under the W.P.A. program to build first a warehouse in 1938 and then later a house, which was occupied by the Roy Boothe family in 1941, according to Forrest Boothe and Helen Boothe Dixon. "CCC crews most likely assisted with the work. This was common operating procedure in those days," said Del Fausett, who started his career with the CCC and later was range manager on the Inyo from 1943 to 1962.

Forest records in the engineering office tell us that a warehouse (#2200) was built at the south side of those five acres in 1938. From statements made by Henry Thorne and Kirk Nance, forest service employees interested in history, and Bud Dixon, longtime Bishop resident and husband of Helen Boothe Dixon, it appears that the warehouse was the first building constructed at the site.

Warehouse number 2200 is still standing and used today. A shop was added onto the west end of the warehouse. At its east end, was the water and pump house for the complex. It was built of cement and served as the pump house for water until the City of Bishop annexed the north end of Main Street, or the Wye area, in 1975. (Thorne,1989).

The ranger's house was built later, sources agree. But the exact date is not in the official records because the house no longer stands at the site. It was moved to the Indian Reservation most likely when the present ranger station was built in 1975. (Thorne,1989). The Boothe children, Helen Dixon, and Forrest Boothe, both recall moving into the house in 1941. Bud Dixon, Helen's husband, stated:

They contracted that house. They had two or three different contractors. The warehouse was there quite awhile before the house was built. They had quite a few buildings there. They even had a tent house and what not for the people who worked for the Forest Service part time. (Booth Family,1990).

The CCC built ranger stations all over California, hundreds of them. Almost every forest got new ranger stations, including a warehouse. The beams for the warehouse were steel trusses, shipped in from the place they have been manufactured. At the region level, they would purchase a large amount of building materials, and then send them out to the forests. Lumber was pre-cut redwood. At Lake Arrowhead

the materials came from Los Angeles, I don't know where those for the Inyo came from. (Most likely from Stockton, according to Henry Thorne.)

Standard plans were designed at the regional level and sent to the district. We'd hire a head carpenter and he would construct the building with what labor he could get out of the CCC camps. A lot of those men were skilled in various trades. (Fausett, 1989).

The majority of functional buildings on the White Mountain compound illustrate another noteworthy fact about the Forest Service and its frugal budget. After the war, the budget for the Inyo as a recreation forest was limited. Quarters for new personnel were badly needed. (Radel, 1989).

When Henry Thorne came to the Inyo in 1946, there was no place for him and his family to live. So he, and some of the other rangers, built a house out of parts taken from a CCC barracks that remained at Shady Rest Camp in 1946. It was located just west of the City of Los Angeles house standing in 1990. After the men hauled it down section by section, Roy Boothe made an arrangement with the sawmill up Bishop Creek to buy experimental lodge pole pine panels at \$10 a thousand for his house. "Money was really tight back then. Boothe was a great old guy. He was willing for us to do that and helped us out." (Thorne, 1989).

Another house was built in 1947 for the executive assistant Roy Able, but it came pre-cut from a factory in Michigan. A third house was built in the same manner as Thorne's house in 1948 for the timber sale officer. (Thorne, 1989).

The White Mountain Warehouse was built on the compound in 1948 with the walls and roof and parts from a structure from the Isabella CCC camp. It was a complete 4 bay warehouse used by the CCC. It was dismantled, trucked to Bishop, and reassembled in 1948. (Thorne, 1989). Its tin roof is of the same slope as the earlier, CCC-built warehouse, but it looks newer than the warehouse constructed in 1938. "I had 20 county prisoners to help me bring up the sections," Thorne said, when asked about the job of moving a big building from Isabella to Bishop. This was done before the camp site was flooded during construction of Lake Isabella. (Thorne, 1989).

Also, across the compound at the Yaney Street side is a garage and auto shop built from parts of the barracks at the CCC camp at Isabella. It was put on a foundation of three feet of concrete, hence it looks higher or taller than the other CCC-related buildings. An open lumber shed was reconstructed from parts left at the Coleville CCC camp. (Thorne, 1989).

When Kirk Nance first came to the Inyo National Forest in 1964 he found the shop still showing signs of its origin. Big red letters on the posts told how to match the various sections, he said. (Personal conversation, 1989).

Rocky Rockwell, now retired from the Forest Service, collaborated this. He laughed and said that he and his wife travel widely each summer, staying in different Forest Service campgrounds. When they found Bootlegged Campground in Nevada, they thought for sure it had been built with parts gleamed from old CCC camps!

We figured the Forest Service finally admitted they had built something from nothing. Amazing things were done after World War II to meet the recreation needs of the forest. State and county road departments worked with the Forest Service in many ways and got things done without a lot of dollars being spent. (Rockwell, 1989).

In addition to the administrative sites, some old buildings still exist and are cared for by the district staff. The very last of the old ranger station, or guard station, on the Inyo remain at Crooked Creek on the White Mountain District. They are used as a cow camp by the Deep Springs College. Forest records state they were built in 1911 by early rangers, needing shelter when they came up to check on the sheep and cattle grazing in that area. (Rockwell,1989).

Situated at an elevation of 9,000 feet in the John Muir Wilderness, the Lon Chaney Cabin was nominated to the National Register of Historic Places and accorded protection under that designation. The cabin was built in 1929 for Lon Chaney, a famous film star of the silent film era thru the 1920s. Chaney portrayed monsters in a line-up of dramatic films. Architect for the cabin was Paul Revere Williams, reputed to be the first black person to become a member of A.I.A.

The cabin is unique in itself and to the region, while it reflects the masterly style of its architect. William's main principle of design was to adapt traditional design to the lifestyle and needs of the client while maintaining harmony with the environmental setting. The cabin so reflected Chaney's lifestyle and personality that Universal Studios filmed a portion of Man of a Thousand Faces (1957) there, a film in which James Cagney portrayed Lone Chaney. The building is suited to the climate through its use of the granite stone walls which withstand severe winters and remain cool in the summer. The natural stone fireplace, open wooden beam rafters, and pine flooring also reflect the lodgepole pine forest surrounding the cabin. (Giansanti,1981). National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nominations ARR-05-04-211.